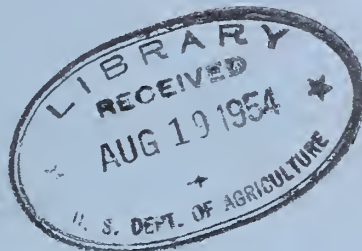


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GETTING YOUR NEW EMPLOYEES
OFF TO A GOOD START



A GUIDE FOR SUPERVISORS
IN ORIENTING THE NEW EMPLOYEE

Personnel Division
Agricultural Marketing Service
United States Department of Agriculture

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A GUIDE FOR SUPERVISORS IN ORIENTING THE NEW EMPLOYEE

RESPONSIBILITIES:

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I. Of the Personnel Division or Branch:

- A. To maintain an adequate supply of orientation "materials" and furnish to operating offices as requested.
- B. Assist operating offices in organizing and carrying out orientation activities.

II. Of Each Office to Which New Employees Are Assigned:

- A. To carry out assigned phases of orientation activity.
- B. Maintain a supply of orientation materials adequate to meet requirements.

The office to which the new employee is assigned is responsible for seeing to it that he gets started off right. Normally, this job will be handled by the organizational unit of which the new employee is a member. Usually, the supervisor will do all or most of this job. Sometimes it will be logical for certain phases to be handled by other members of the organization. The most important consideration is that the job be done completely and well.

Outline of Orientation Procedure

This outline is for the use of supervisors and other officials. It is designed for the effective orientation of the new employee with very little, or no, Federal Government work experience. The supervisor must be the judge of the elements which are relevant in each individual case. The topics suggested for discussion are, for the most part, dealt with in the reference material to be furnished to the employee. Other pertinent documents not included in this list should be furnished to the employee or he should be told how he may gain access to such material.

I. Preparation by the Supervisor:

- A. Have kit of reference materials (listed under K below) already assembled. Use a durable personalized container.
- B. Be familiar with the material. See that it's current, and complete (augment, delete, revise). Have identified the highlights to be emphasized.
- C. Check on employee's background -- know where he was raised, went to school, has worked.

II. When the Employee Reports for Duty:

- A. Give him your attention right away. Don't make him wait around a long time before you see him.
- B. Give him a sincere and friendly welcome - treat him the way you would like to be treated when reporting to a new job.
- C. Let him know you were expecting him.
- D. Hold your discussion in a favorable setting - free of interruption; allow plenty of time to avoid the need for hurrying, to do a good job.
- E. Spend a little time, at the start, talking about things of personal interest to him - his background, family, etc. Let him talk.
- F. Find out if he knows anything about the organization and the work, and encourage him to talk on these points.
- G. Tell him what the work hours are, when the lunch period is and explain other similar operating practices and employee facilities.
- H. Help him get his appointment details completed.
- I. Show him his place of work and the general area in which he will work.
- J. See that he meets the people he will be closely associated with - clearly identify them.
- K. Give him his kit of reference materials with a statement something like this:

"This is material which we have gotten together for your use. You will find it helpful in learning about the organization and your new job. After we have looked it over and talked about some of the highlights, you may keep this material. It's for your use. You will want to study these things pretty carefully. As you go through them, I suggest you make a note about anything that is not entirely clear. We'll get together again now and then and talk about these things some more. I know there is a lot to become familiar with but don't let that bother you. I want you to feel free to ask questions at any time."

The following list of materials represents the minimum which shall be furnished to each new employee: (Obtain from the Personnel Office.)

1. U.S.D.A. Employee Handbook - No. 23 Revised.
2. The booklet "Organization and Functions of AMS."
3. Certificate of Membership in C.S. Retirement System, SF-105 or the leaflet "Your Social Security Benefits."
4. A current copy of the official job description for the position the employee is assigned to.

(The following additional materials are to be furnished employees who will work in areas remote from their general headquarters.)

5. Procedure to be followed in personal injury cases (Title 8, Chap. 51, Administrative Regulations.)
 6. Regulations for maintaining leave accounts (Title 7, Chap. 3, Sec. 9, Administrative Regulations.)
- L. During this first meeting discuss the above material and that listed in III below only to the extent desirable in the judgment of the supervisor. Avoid trying to cover too much at one time. Govern the amount by the apparent ability of the employee to absorb.
- M. Set a definite time - preferably within the next day or two - for the next discussion. Give the employee a general idea of the topics to be reviewed at that time. Again, urge the employee to make notes of the things that are not clear.

III. Topics to Review and Action to Take During the First and Subsequent Discussions:

- A. Employment status of the employee and Personnel Policies of the Department.
1. Explain the type of appointment given the employee (check appointment Form SF-50).
 2. Explain the probationary or trial period - how long, what it means, and the responsibility it places on the employee and his supervisor.
 3. Review the provisions of the over-all Departmental Personnel (Employee Handbook).
 4. Review Fair Employment Practices and Appeals (Employee Handbook).

B. The Organization:

1. Briefly discuss the history and functions of the Department--some of its major responsibilities to the public and its influence upon world economy.
2. Explain the organizational structure of the Department and of A.M.S. Elaborate upon the Divisional, Branch and Unit structures; the functions of the Unit and how they fit into the over-all program.
3. Outline the functions of staff units and their relationship to the line organization.
4. Fully explain the employee's place in the organization--who his superior is, who his subordinates are, if any, his relationship to his co-workers, and the relationship of his work unit to other units with which he has contact.

C. His Pay:

1. Explain pay scales and pay days (Title 5, Chap. 7, Sec. 1, of Administrative Regulations).
2. Explain what the grade of his position means, how it is determined, and how salary rates are arrived at.
3. Explain deductions for income tax and for retirement or Social Security. Tell him the net amount of each pay check.
4. Explain the periodic and longevity pay increase provisions.

D. His Job:

1. Discuss the employee's duties and responsibilities. Review with him the description of his job.
2. Describe the performance requirements established for his job. Furnish the employee with a copy of the approved performance requirements if written requirements for this position have been prepared.
3. Tell him about the performance rating plan--who rates his performance and when--the purposes his performance rating will serve.

E. Leave, Non-Work Days, and Overtime:

1. Explain how much sick and annual leave he earns; the basic reasons for the prescribed leave privileges; the policy with respect to requesting and granting leave.

2. Outline the provisions with respect to leave without pay and leave with pay other than sick and annual (educational, military, etc.)
3. Explain the policy with respect to overtime work, pay for overtime, and granting compensatory time off.
4. Tell him about designated holidays and the conditions under which other portions of his regular tour of duty may be officially designated as non-work periods.

F. Safety and Health:

1. Fully explain the AMS policy with respect to safety in all operations; that one of his important responsibilities is to conduct all of his activities in such a way as to avoid injury to himself and to others and to prevent property loss or damage through carelessness or the commission or condonement of hazardous practices; provide him with copies of the Department and AMS safety policies and the current unit safety plan.
2. Explain compensation benefits and the importance of prompt and complete reporting of injuries and the reporting procedure. Review "When Injured at Work" (Employee Handbook) and AMS Instructions Relating to Accident Reporting Procedures.
3. Tell the employee about available health and medical facilities and the importance of utilizing them.

G. Conduct, Restrictions, and Improper Practices:

1. Explain the policies of the organization with respect to - political activity, falsification and misappropriation of records, speculation, acceptance of fees, personal indebtedness, membership in organizations, using official position for personal gain, and unacceptable personal conduct.
2. Point out the importance of security precautions and practices with respect to sensitive activities and classified material.

H. Grievances and Appeals:

1. Emphasize the importance of promptly presenting to his supervisor any problem, complaint, or other disturbing circumstance which the employee is unable to remedy without help. The employee must be convinced that this is one of his real responsibilities and that results which are adverse to him will not occur by reason of his taking such action.

2. Explain the several established appeals procedures and inform him that their use is entirely appropriate when acceptable results cannot be achieved by other means. (Personal Relations Appeals Procedure, in Employee Handbook.)

I. Career Opportunities and Other Benefits:

1. Explain career and promotion opportunities in AMS and the Department. Point out the education, training, and experience qualifications required for advancement to certain positions and kinds of work. Make it clear that it is the mutual responsibility of the employee and his supervisor to develop and record the employee's career plan. See that the employee understands that it is his responsibility to report promptly any developments serving to alter this plan.

2. Employees' Incentive Awards Program:

Explain the types of awards available and the conditions under which the employee may become eligible for such awards. Furnish him with a copy of the AMS reference material which outlines the various types of awards and the conditions under which they are granted.

3. Retirement benefits, if applicable, should be reviewed. Tell him about age (optional and mandatory) and disability retirement provisions. Give him an idea of the annuities resulting from selected combinations of salary base and years of service. Interest on deduction accumulations, withdrawal privileges, and voluntary contributions are items that should not be overlooked. Explain use of "Designation of Beneficiary" (SF-2808).
4. Social Security Benefits, if applicable, should be reviewed. Explain deductions and the benefits that will accrue under certain sets of conditions. Furnish him with reference material which outlines the Social Security Program in detail.

J. Other Employee Activities and Programs:

1. Tell him about employee activities, to the extent available, such as the U.S.D.A. Clubs, Credit Union, cooperative purchase organizations, organized athletic and social activities and the like.
2. Furnish material about and explain the U.S.D.A. Beneficial Association.
3. Explain the facilities offered by the U.S.D.A. Graduate School and the ways in which they may be utilized.

K. Travel - if applicable:

1. Review the highlights of AMS travel policy and U. S. Government Standard Travel Regulations - per diem, mileage rates, use of Transportation Requests, Letter of Authorization, etc. Give him a copy of the Travel Regulations to review.
2. Emphasize the importance of prudent operation and care of Government owned motor vehicles and privately owned vehicles operated on a mileage basis. Outline operational and maintenance standards and make certain that the employee thoroughly understands the nature of his responsibilities.

L. Responsibilities to the Public and the Department:

The employee should be made to realize fully the scope and importance of his responsibilities to the public and to the Department. It should be emphasized that while on duty he is an official representative of the Department and will be considered by the public as such. The employee should recognize that while off duty his actions will reflect upon the Department. He should be made to realize that the attitude of the public toward the Department will be substantially influenced by the attitude he displays in public contacts - in person, by telephone and through correspondence.

M. Other Matters to Review with the Employee:

1. Designation of Beneficiary - payment of funds under the Retirement Act (SF-2803).
2. Designation of Beneficiary - unpaid compensation of deceased civilian employee (SF-1152).
3. Allotment card explaining the systematic payroll savings plan which is optional with, and for the convenience of the employee.
4. Use of lunch rooms during regular hours of work (Title I, Chap. 16, Sec. 3, Administrative Regulations.)
5. Directing employee inquiries to agency Personnel Offices - Personnel Memo P-598.
6. Legal assistance available to employees - Personnel Memo P-564 Revised.

IV. The Relation of the Probationary or Trial Period to Employee Orientation:

How well the employee is oriented will have considerable bearing upon the way the employee responds during his probationary or trial period. The success or the failure of the employee will frequently be determined by how well his supervisor handles the orientation job. In the interests of the employee and of AMS the supervisor is charged with certain definite responsibilities.

To do an acceptable job the supervisor will:

1. Make certain the employee fully understands the conditions of the probationary or trial period and the purpose it will serve.
2. Make certain the employee fully understands his duties, his responsibilities and the performance requirements that have been established.
3. Determine the training needs of the employee by comparison of his qualifications with his duties and performance requirements of his job; develop and utilize an individual training program based on such needs.
4. Check on the employee's progress, in all of its aspects, with appropriate frequency.
5. Give him full credit and encouragement for performance at or above the acceptable level.
6. See that he receives appropriate training to the extent required in an effort to bring about sufficient improvement in elements of the job in which performance is below the established standard.
7. Give proper consideration to problems and questions presented by the employee and give him every reasonable opportunity to reach an acceptable standard of performance.
8. Keep the employee fully, accurately, and currently informed as to the acceptability of his progress.
9. Recommend removal of the employee as soon as he concludes that such action is appropriate. (Action should not be delayed until the end of the period nor beyond the time such determination is made.)
10. Provide the employee with a full explanation of the reasons for the decision that he is unsuited for that position.
11. Furnish to the appropriate official a full report of the qualifications and lack of qualifications demonstrated by the employee in order that his possible reassignment may be accorded proper consideration.
12. When appropriate, promptly inform the employee that his probationary or trial period has been successfully completed. The significance of this accomplishment should be fully explained.
13. Apply supervisory practices of the highest standard in all relationships with the employee.

ORIENTATION MATERIALS TO BE OBTAINED FROM THE PERSONNEL
DIVISION AND PERSONNEL BRANCHES OF AREA ADMINISTRATIVE
DIVISIONS

1. U.S.D.A. Employee Handbook, No. 23, Revised.
2. The booklet "Organization and Functions of AMS"
3. Certificate of Membership in C.S. Retirement System,
SF-105.
4. The leaflet "Your Social Security Benefits"
5. Application for membership in U.S.D.A. Beneficial
Association.
6. Informational material concerning the U.S.D.A.
Graduate School.
7. Designation of Beneficiary - SF-2808.
8. Designation of Beneficiary - SF-1152.
9. Allotment card explaining the systematic payroll
savings plan, U. S. Treasury Form 2254.
10. Personnel Memorandum P-598.
11. Personnel Memorandum P-564 Revised.

